

Senate Bill No. 854

CHAPTER 481

An act to amend Section 2146 of, and to add Section 2148 to, the Elections Code, relating to voter registration.

[Approved by Governor October 11, 2007. Filed with
Secretary of State October 11, 2007.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 854, Ridley-Thomas. Voter registration: students.

(1) Existing law requires the Secretary of State to annually provide secondary education and specified postsecondary education campuses with a number of voter registration forms that is consistent with the number of students enrolled at each school. The Secretary of State is required to provide written notice with each form, instructing students regarding voter eligibility and where to file the completed forms.

This bill would allow students to submit completed voter registration forms to the Secretary of State in addition to returning the forms in person or by mail to the elections official of the county in which the student resides. This bill would require every community college and California State University campus that operates an automated class registration system on or before January 1, 2008, to permit students through an automated program in coordination with the Secretary of State, during the class registration process, to elect to receive a voter registration form that is preprinted with personal information relevant to voter registration by January 1, 2010. This bill would further allow a community college or California State University campus that does not operate an automated class registration system on or before January 1, 2008, 2 years from when it begins operating an automated class registration system to implement an automated voter registration program. This bill would state that the University of California is encouraged to comply with this requirement. The bill also would require the Secretary of State to annually submit to the Legislature, on or before January 1 of each year, a report on its student voter registration efforts, as specified.

This bill would require every high school, community college, and California State University campus to designate a contact person, as specified, for the Secretary of State to contact in order to facilitate the distribution of voter registration cards. This bill would state that the University of California is encouraged to comply with this requirement.

By imposing new duties on public schools and the community colleges, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

(2) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 2146 of the Elections Code is amended to read:

2146. (a) The Secretary of State shall annually provide every high school, community college, and California State University and University of California campus with voter registration forms. The number of forms shall be consistent with the number of students enrolled at each school who are of voting age or will be of voting age by the end of the year. The Secretary of State shall provide additional forms to any school, free of charge, if so requested by a school.

(b) The Secretary of State shall provide a written notice with each registration form describing eligibility requirements and informing each student that he or she may return the completed form in person or by mail to the elections official of the county in which the student resides or to the Secretary of State.

(c) (1) (A) Every community college and California State University campus that operates an automated class registration system on or before January 1, 2008, shall, through an automated program, in coordination with the Secretary of State, permit students, during the class registration process, to elect to receive a voter registration form that is preprinted with personal information relevant to voter registration by January 1, 2010.

(B) Any community college or California State University campus that does not operate an automated class registration system on or before January 1, 2008, shall, within two years of implementing an automated class registration system, through an automated program in coordination with the Secretary of State, permit students, during the class registration process, to elect to receive a voter registration form that is preprinted with personal information relevant to voter registration.

(2) As soon as a community college or California State University or University of California campus complies with paragraph (1), the Secretary of State may continue, at his or her discretion, to provide the campus with voter registration forms unless the campus requests not to receive the voter registration forms.

(3) The University of California is encouraged to comply with this subdivision.

(d) The Secretary of State shall submit to the Legislature, on or before January 1 of each year, a report on its student voter registration efforts pursuant to this article. This report shall include estimates as to how many voter registration forms were sent to high schools, community colleges, and California State University and University of California campuses, how many voter registration forms were returned, and how many voter registration

forms were sent out to students through the automated program described in subdivision (c).

(e) It is the intent of the Legislature that every high school and college student receive a voter registration card with his or her diploma. It is also the intent of the Legislature that every school do all in its power to ensure that students are provided the opportunity and means to register to vote. This may include providing voter registration forms at the start of the school year, including voter registration forms with orientation materials, placing voter registration forms at central locations, including voter registration forms with graduation materials.

SEC. 2. Section 2148 is added to the Elections Code, to read:

2148. (a) Every high school, community college, and California State University campus shall designate a contact person and provide his or her address, telephone number, and e-mail address, when possible, to the Secretary of State for the Secretary of State to contact in order to facilitate the distribution of voter registration cards, as provided under this article.

(b) The University of California is encouraged to comply with this subdivision.

SEC. 3. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.